

Enhancing ownership in design games through documentation

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In this workshop we present our experience with *the Scenario building Game*, a hands-on toolkit to playfully support interdisciplinary design teams to develop shared imaginaries for complex design projects. Specifically, we elaborate on how we try to create ownership of the process, form and output of the design game during and also after playing it, by enhancing documentation of these three elements to trigger people. Next to ownership, this documentation process also wants to stimulate (re-)use it after playing it.

Documenting players during the design game

Design games aim to engage and enable players – often coming from different backgrounds and having different roles – to bring in their perspectives and collaboratively envision future design scenarios (Brandt, 2006). They achieve this by providing a playful and informal setting and constructive constraints, e.g. the game rule to take turns, to build further upon each other's ideas or to form small design teams (e.g. Vaajakallio, 2012; Huybrechts et al., 2012). While this bringing in of perspectives already involves the creation of a sense of ownership, we believe ownership can be made more explicit by enabling players to document their personal perspectives and their collective output. Three aspects of the Scenario building Game contribute to documentation of players: 1. players make profile cards in the beginning of the game, documenting their own role; 2. their ideas are documented and physically linked to these profiles while playing; 3. profiles and ideas are worked out in more detail and documented in the output of the game, indicating specific roles for players in this design scenario (see further).

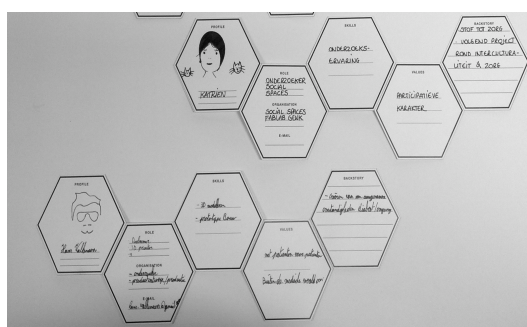


fig.1 Profile cards document roles, skills and backstory



fig. 2 Documenting profiles and ideas during gameplay

Documenting the form of the game for use during and after gameplay

A design language is developed for the game and is illustrated in the game manual and other game materials. Players are stimulated to use this design language to document their personal roles and ideas to assemble them into a collective scenario during gameplay. They are given drawing templates and hexagonal cards, to support this collaborative design process. The design language is modular, allowing the players to alter it during gameplay. All game materials, e.g. drawing templates and game cards, are documented so they can be downloaded, produced and altered in an open context such as a Fablab. In this way, players cannot only appropriate the content of the game, but also its form to fit their needs. Furthermore, we believe that using the same design language and toolkit throughout the whole project, contributes to it being some kind of infrastructure (providing a platform, a shared language and tools to enable participation after the game is finished; Ehn, 2008). This creates a sense of ownership throughout the game playing, and also after the game is finished.

Documenting the game's output to enable further (re)use after gameplay

While openness and interpretability of design documentation, during and after game play, can be seen as an affordance of design games to trigger engagement and envisioning during gameplay (Vaajakallio, 2012), and inspire design teams to move on, we believe it can lead to a reduction of essential readability in the output of the design game (Huybrechts & Schoffelen, 2012). Design games (similar to other co-design formats) not always lead to a specific and readable output, i.e. it isn't always easy to re-read the output of a design game. We explore how more support in documenting the process of the game and the output can enhance an interesting (re)use of its results after playing. The output of the design game can be imagined as a kind of 'ready-made', to appropriate and to build upon in a design

project. Since scenarios have the quality to bring readable stories and trigger imagination at the same time, the Scenario building Game specifically uses scenario as a documentation form. We explore how this form of documenting can make the game output engaging and evocative, visual and interpretive, but also readable for players to take it with them further in the design project, build further upon it, or to reuse it in different ways or in different contexts.

The Scenario building Game is developed throughout different cases, but we will illustrate our goals by describing one specific project of our research group *Social Spaces*. In *Bespoke Design*, a design project to design open tools for self-managing diabetes, we used the game throughout different phases of the project. In a first explorative phase we did desk research, interviews and workshops with people with diabetes, their family and caregivers. We did not yet use the Scenario building Game in this phase, but explicitly re-used the content that participants provided into our second phase, by concretising it into three points of interest to elaborate upon in the project. The core design team (an interaction designer, a product designer and two social researchers) and participants with diabetes, used the Scenario building Game to collaboratively explore these three aspects. The game evolves in two stages: team building and scenario building. During the team building stage, participants put their profile cards and ideas on the table. Depending on how they roll the dice they bring in ideas in the form of props, settings, characters, challenges, and opportunities, and later, as design ideas and bridging cards to form smaller teams.

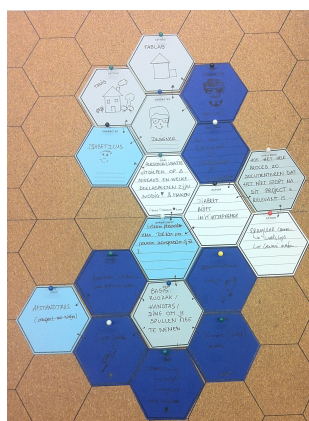


fig. 3 A scenario documents profiles, goals, roles in a comprehensive reading line

In the scenario-building stage, the smaller teams work out their ideas more in depth in the form of a scenario. They negotiate upon a common goal, reuse the challenges and opportunities from the first phase, and provide the scenario with more contextual elements, i.e. settings, props and characters, representing also their own role in the project to overcome challenges and achieve the common goal. Also, other characters representing roles that are not yet involved in the project can be added to the scenario. The game rules and game materials support players to document the game and the ideas that are generated in a readable output: it provides step-by-step instructions to build a scenario, to document specific roles for the players in the scenario and to create a comprehensive reading line. Participants with diabetes and the core

design team will use the scenario to make short video messages to represent their ideas and perspectives as are documented in the scenario. These videos will be remixed to brief a design workshop in which different designers will work out some prototypes for these scenarios. The designers will present their prototype in a new video message, and their input will be added to the scenario in the same visual language as used during the design game.

During the workshop we would like to play a short demo of the first part of the Scenario building Game. For this we want to zoom in on the phase of forming teams, where ideas are negotiated. Concretely we will play and evaluate a new iteration of the documentation of this negotiation process. Preferably we would have 1 hour to play the demo (for playing with 4 players) and if needed we can reduce it to 30 minutes.

References

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